matic or manual control, or even pressure variations from ambient or from elevated or decreased pressure magnitudes resulting from voluntary or involuntary user response. The invention further contemplates the monitoring of any such pressure magnitude or variation thereof.

Respecting the FIG. 1 through 3 embodiments, the invention also contemplates an apparatus comprised of separate inner garment, vacuum bead shell, and outer garment structures. The inner garment may be, for example, a foam rubber shell bonded to a fabric backing for the purpose of separating the vacuum bead structure from the user's body. The outer garment may be of the character above described with reference to flexible shell 34, and may include all of the requisite seals such as the described seals 20. Thus it will be clear that the above described components of the invention may be integrally formed together, formed separately and permanently or separably connected, or formed separately and applied one over the other to make up a flexible body enclosing sheath apparatus as above described.

As the inventors herein, we have contemplated these and other alternative and modified embodiments, and certainly such would also occur to others versed in the art once they were apprised of the invention. Accordingly, it is intended that the invention be construed broadly and limited only by the scope of the claims appended hereto.

We claim:

1. In the medical treatment of sleep apnea syndrome, the method of treatment comprised of applying to frontal portions of a patient's neck a pressure sufficiently less than ambient pressure to distend adjacent neck tissue in a manner effective for alleviating obstruction of the patient's airway in sleep.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1 including the additional step of simultaneously applying an elevated pressure greater than the first mentioned said pressure within the patient's airway.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein said elevated pressure is of a magnitude greater than ambient atmospheric pressure.